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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAKU 001622

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SUBJECT: AZERBAIJAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY CONCEPT EXPECTED TO
BE FINISHED BY END 2006

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DERSE FOR REASONS 1.5 (B, C)

11. SUMMARY: At a November 3 meeting, the UK representative of International Advisors Working Group (IAWG), retired UK General Sir Garry Johnson said that Azerbaijan's National Security Concept (NSC) will likely be finished and approved by the end of 2006. Johnson reported that his role as advisor continued to be that of helping to guide the process, and not to contribute to the document's substance. Johnson believed that NSC will not contain mention of a specific intent to join NATO, nor will it contain language that West would oppose. Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov told Johnson that he hoped that the IAWG which advised Azerbaijan on the interagency process would remain intact after the NSC was completed. Johnson advised that while the Azerbaijanis would likely welcome more U.S. involvement, the value of inserting a U.S. advisor at this late stage in the preparation of the NSC were unclear, and suggested that the U.S. "missed the boat". Most NATO Ambassadors in Baku agree that, regardless of the NSC's content, the process behind it with an emphasis on strategic analysis and interagency process --is itself an important reform step. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) During a November 3, 2006, meeting with retired UK General Sir Garry Johnson, Ambassador Derse, A/DATT and poloff (notetaker), Johnson reported that based on his discussions in Baku with relevant MFA and other officials, Azerbaijan's NSC will likely be completed by the end of November 2006. Upon completion, the document will be submitted to President Aliyev for review and finally to the Azerbaijani Parliament for approval, which Azimov told Johnson could happen by the end of 2006. The writing of the document, which has been over two years in the works, is an important part of Azerbaijan's NATO Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP).

SUBSTANCE REMAINS A MYSTERY

13. (C) Johnson, who is the UK representative of the IAWG, which on paper includes representatives from Germany, Turkey and the United States, has been advising the Azerbaijani Foreign and Defense Ministries about how such a document should be formed for over two years. Johnson's role has primarily been that of facilitator, and not an advisor on substance. Johnson said that the document would likely "not include a statement with a specific intent to join NATO." Furthermore, Johnson said that IAWG's role was to help Azerbaijan present a document that would not embarrass the GOAJ or that the West would oppose. Despite these intentions, Johnson said that he knew very little about the substance of the document.

IAWG'S ROLE TO CHANGE?

14. (C) Johnson said that although he and the German representative had been active, there has been little representation from the U.S. and that the Turkish delegate has been sick, and has participated little in the past several months. Johnson said that as the NSC neared completion that the role of the IAWG would change to be one to "push them along, as much as to comment." The role the IAWG would play in the drafting of the Military Doctrine and Foreign Policy Strategy was not clear to Johnson, although Azimov told Johnson of his strong intention to keep the group together. More interestingly, Johnson said that Azimov told him that the role of the group in the future could be to "work on other topics" as they come up. When Johnson queried Azimov further on this, Azimov did not give more specifics, and mentioned that it may have been an idea that Azimov was simply batting around.

MOVING FORWARD

15. (C) In a late October 2006 meeting with poloff, Gaya Mammedov of the Azerbaijani MFA, and one of the primary drafters of the NSC said that upon completion of the NSC, Azerbaijan's interagency working group would begin the drafting of the "Military Doctrine" and the "Foreign Policy Strategy" documents. These documents would stem from the more general NSC document. Mammedov said that the Military

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Doctrine was already fifty percent finished, despite the fact that the drafting process had not officially started. Mammedov said that the completion of the NSC document was the result of a two year process, which began when President Aliyev signed a presidential decree on September 17, 2004, which authorized the "Interagency Working Group" specifically to draft the three documents.

16. (C) Mammedov explained that the first year was spent simply learning about how an interagency coordination process happened from international experts (including IAWG), and that there was little coordination or writing that took place in the first year. Over time the Interagency Working Group became less reliant on IAWG. According to both Mammedov and Johnson, representatives of the MFA and Ministry of Defense consulted the IAWG more on process rather than substance. The process has been a long one because Azerbaijan's interagency working group consists of 23 separate individuals representing different offices, ministries or state committees, from the MFA to the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economic Development, the State Special Engineering and Conversion Committee, and the head engineer of the Department of Fuel and Energetics, to name just a few.

ROLE FOR U.S. ADVISOR

17. (C) Both Mammadov and Johnson said that the Azerbaijanis were interested in having more U.S. participation in the IAWG. However, Johnson cautioned that a U.S. advisor, like him, would likely not be asked to contribute substantively to the writing of the document, but would rather play an advising role on process and stylistic issues which could help keep the process moving. Johnson also mentioned that good progress has been made to date and that the costs of having a U.S. advisor would have to take into account Azerbaijan's desire to be perceived as having a moderate and balanced approach to NATO accession. Johnson said that given that Azerbaijan has been somewhat secretive about the NSC's content, he was not confident that inserting a U.S. advisor

at this point in the process would necessarily be productive, saying that "in some respects, the U.S. has missed the boat", and that instead he believed that it may be better to engage Azerbaijan directly at the government-to-government level.

PROCESS OVER SUBSTANCE

18. (C) During several late October and early November 2006 discussions, the broad consensus amongst Baku-based NATO member country Ambassadors is that Azerbaijan wants to proceed cautiously and deliberately with NATO, and that there is likely no unified view as yet within the GOAJ with respect to its ultimate intention vis-a-vis NATO. However, senior GOAJ leaders recently have dropped hints that Azerbaijan may now want to proceed toward NATO integration in a more determined fashion. Regardless of the pace and ultimate goal of Azerbaijan's NATO IPAP process, the military and defense sector reforms undertaken as part of the IPAP commitments are needed and are already creating results. In the case of the NSC, the strategic thinking and interagency process created as a result of the drafting process will improve Azerbaijan's foreign policy process and will advance NATO interests.
DERSE